7. Maintenance

In order to establish aquatic vegetation in wetlands, it is crucial to eradicate and suppress the establishment of certain key weeds by means of a well budgeted, designed and implemented weed control strategy, which includes timely application of appropriate methods, monitoring and follow up. High threat wetland weeds in Victoria are ranked in DSE (2008). Ideally weed control should be carried out by specialist contractors or skilled volunteers with proven ability to identify indigenous and weed species. If performed correctly, weed control will encourage regeneration of indigenous species and result in successful vegetation establishment.

8. Monitoring

Regular inspections of establishing wetland vegetation should be made over the first 12 months to monitor its progress and assess if adaptive management is required. The frequency of these inspections should be between every two to four weeks, and additional visits should be triggered by large rainfall events that may cause flooding. The checklist of things to be monitored during each inspection include photo points (Fig. 3) plant health, weed invasion, the effects of rainfall and evaporation on water levels, any impacts from wave action, water salinity, turbidity and pH, impacts from pedestrian traffic or dog walking, wetland bird grazing and fauna colonisation.

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Bird vomit, the tour leader and the butcherbird 'sweet tooth'

While visiting Uluru last year, Fred Bohner, Kathy Himbeck and I decided to do the Mutitjulu Waterhole walk. While we were taking our time birdwatching and enjoying the scenery of this sacred place, a pair of Pied Butcherbirds *Cracticus nigrogularis* were seen regularly taking food back to their nest. After observing these birds for a few minutes we walked further and caught up to a tour group from a well-known Australian/New Zealand bus tour company. Not wanting to walk through the group, as their tour leader was talking with them, we stood back and listened to her spiel. Our interest in what she was saying was heightened when she started referring to a white coating all over the leaves of some small saplings as 'bird vomit'. On a closer inspection, after the group had moved on, the 'vomit' was found to be the lerp casings of the nymph stages of psyllid insects. It was a heavy infestation on the sapling gums, as can be seen in Fig. 1.

Being a stickler for correcting misinformation, especially about natural history, I spoke to the guide quietly and let her know that the 'vomit' was in fact the sugary secretions of sap-sucking insects. She was going to check with her source of information, a local *Anangu* young man, who was a fellow tour leader. Whether the bird vomit relates to a traditional story, I have been unable to determine.

On our return walk from the waterhole, I observed an immature butcherbird on the ground, picking up items from the soil and eating them. As the bird was distracted by what it was doing, I was able to get close enough to take a series of photos. After the bird flew off, I walked over to